DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 463 134 RC 023 436

TITLE	Education of Teachers of Indigenous Students in Early Childhood Services and Schools. Discussion Paper.
INSTITUTION	Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, Carlton South (Australia).
PUB DATE	2001-06-00
NOTE	39p.; Produced by the MCEETYA Taskforce on Indigenous Education.
AVAILABLE FROM	For full text: http://www.curriculum.edu.au/mctyapdf/educationofteachersinecs.pdf.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Evaluative (142)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Day Care Centers; Early Childhood Education; Educational Needs; *Educational Quality; Educational Trends; Foreign Countries; Indigenous Populations; *Preservice Teacher Education; *Standards; *Teacher Effectiveness
IDENTIFIERS	*Aboriginal Australians; *Australia; Social Justice

ABSTRACT

An Australian national task force examined a number of areas related to achieving educational equality for Australia's Indigenous peoples. This paper reviews recent and current efforts to raise the quality of initial teacher education and presents a draft set of professional standards for accomplished teachers of Indigenous students in early childhood services and schools. Chapter 1 summarizes the international and Australian policy context relating to changes in education in the last two decades and the pressures on teaching and teacher education to respond to changes in attitudes toward the fundamental purposes and functions of education, particularly social justice issues. The outcomes-based approach to schooling has the potential to improve the education and attainments of disadvantaged students, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. However, realization of this potential depends upon appropriate preparation of preservice teachers. Chapter 2 examines difficulties that some Indigenous children experience in meeting national literacy standards, populations statistics, and national efforts to accelerate progress in Indigenous education. Chapter 3 discusses work undertaken in the United States, England, Canada, and Australia to improve teacher quality; describes the Quality Improvement and Accreditation System for day care centers; and presents five draft professional standards related to teacher commitment, knowledge base for teaching, teacher responsibility, reflective practice, and learning communities. Appendices present policy statements of related goals, principles, and standards. (Contains 22 references.) (SV)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 463 134

EDUCATION OF TEACHERS

OF

INDIGENOUS STUDENTS

IN

EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES AND SCHOOLS

MCEETYA TASKFORCE ON INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

DISCUSSION PAPER

JUNE 2001

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

RC 023436

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

J. McArthur

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

CONTENTS

Executive Summary		**p.3**
Chapter 1:	**International And National Policy Context**	**p.4**
	Introduction	p.4
	International trends	p.4
	Australian trends	p.5
	Senate Inquiry report into the status of teachers	p.5
	Initial teacher training	p.6
	Social justice concerns	p.7
	Current work	p.8
Chapter 2:	**Indigenous Education Issues**	**p.10**
	Introduction	p.10
	Educational attainment issues for Indigenous children	p.10
	Population statistics	p.11
	National work to accelerate progress	p.12
	Previous Taskforce advice	p.14
	Current work	p.15
Chapter 3:	**Professional Standards For Teachers**	**p.17**
	Introduction	p.17
	International work on teacher quality and standards	p.17
	US National Board for Professional Teaching Standards	p.18
	Work in Australia on teacher quality and standards	p.20
	NSW review of teacher education	p.20
	Teaching profession activities	p.21
	Quality of early childhood services	p.22
	Professional standards for teachers of Indigenous students	p.23
Appendix 1:	National Goals for Schooling in the 21st Century (Adelaide Declaration)	p.28
Appendix 2:	Statement of principles and standards for more culturally inclusive schooling in the 21st century	p.31
Appendix 3:	Principles of the Quality Improvement and Accreditation System for long-day care centres	p.35
References:		**p.37**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the last decade, teacher education has been the subject of numerous overseas and Commonwealth and State government reports and enquiries which have attempted to set directions and describe strategies for raising the quality of initial teacher education.

The Taskforce acknowledges the considerable amount of advice that had been developed in recent years. This work includes the Deans of Education report, the Senate Inquiry report into the status of teachers, the current discussions on national teacher standards, the work by the MCEETYA Taskforce on teacher preparation and recruitment on beginning teachers, the NSW review of teacher education and the establishment of a national accreditation system for long day care centres.

The Taskforce recognises the current momentum for Australian society to be more democratic, socially cohesive, linguistically and culturally diverse, educated, just and open. The Adelaide Declaration states that Australia's future depends upon each citizen having the necessary knowledge, understanding, skills and values and that high quality schooling is central to achieving this vision.

Overlaying this is the imperative to achieve reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. The imperative to achieve reconciliation makes the Australian story unique in the world. The Taskforce recognises that there is a strong belief among Australian educators that reconciliation begins in our schools and that achieving educational equality for young Indigenous people is central to reconciliation.

Within this context, this paper reviews recent and current efforts to raise the quality of initial teacher education. The Taskforce noted that most of this work does not specifically address issues for teachers of Indigenous students and considered that it was timely to develop and promote a draft set of professional standards for accomplished teachers of Indigenous students in early childhood services and schools to inform current discussions about the quality of teaching and teaching education programs.

Many of the issues raised in these draft standards reflect the Taskforce's view that accomplished teachers demonstrate their professional standards by their commitment to preparing all students for a productive and rewarding life as citizens in a democratic and multicultural Australia, and by their commitment to achieving educational equality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

CHAPTER 1: INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT

This chapter summarises the international and national policy context relating to the changes in education over the last two decades and the pressures on teaching and teacher education to respond to changes in attitudes towards the fundamental purposes and functions of education, particularly to social justice issues.

Introduction

Improvements in educational quality has been firmly on the international and Australian policy agenda for the past two decades. There is increasing evidence that the best approaches to improving the quality of education are those that support both school level improvement through 'quality assurance' and 'system level accountability'.

Quality assurance generally arises from concerns within an organisation and from the desire of organisations and individuals to provide evidence of the high quality of their products, processes, procedures and management, and to establish conditions under which they may be enhanced. Accountability arises from the efforts of external bodies or whole systems to measure outcomes, and to hold managers accountable for processes, programs and outcome levels achieved. Benchmarking and comparison with other similar enterprises in terms of productivity and quality are core issues.

From the quality assurance point of view, there is a presumption that teachers who are knowledgeable in their subject and have good professional judgement will be effective. From an accountability point of view, the best indicator of teaching effectiveness is the ability to achieve equitable outcomes for students in terms of national benchmarks. The availability of student outcome data enabling research into the effect of teacher quality and qualifications on student learning has increased significantly the interest of government and teachers themselves in the ability of teacher education programs to support both 'quality assurance' and 'teaching effectiveness'.

International trends

Throughout OECD countries at least, there is widespread public concern with the outcomes of education, and over recent years, a number of different approaches to the issue of initial teacher education have been promoted.

Amongst popular models for teacher education are those which incorporate productive partnerships between schools and universities to promote the communication of professional understanding among teacher educators, novice and veteran teachers. Such models aim to support the learning of beginning teachers by creating settings in which novices enter professional practice by working with expert practitioners, allowing these expert practitioners to renew their own professional development and assume new roles as mentors, faculty adjuncts and teacher leaders.

However there is a sharp divide within these approaches between those who favour a model of teachers as technically competent practitioners (technicians who implement government policy) and those who seek reflective, professional teachers, capable of thoughtfully evaluating their own work, adaptable, committed to equity and social justice and a process of lifelong learning. The technician-teacher is seen to be in a good position to protect and reproduce the social status quo; the reflective teacher is seen to be a better agent of social transformation. These models, then are closely related

to perceptions of the fundamental purposes and functions of schooling, especially social justice issues.

Australian trends

In Australia, there has been a marked shift since the 1980s in attitudes towards the fundamental purposes and functions of education. The 1989 National Goals for Schooling in Australian Schools encapsulated these changes in attitude and were reaffirmed in the 1999 National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century (Adelaide Declaration). Full text of the national goals is at **Appendix 1**.

Achieving the National Goals for Schooling requires a high quality teaching workforce, both in schools and in early childhood services. Research both in Australia and overseas confirms the view that high quality teachers are the foundation of highly effective schools and that in terms of student achievement, the teacher is a more significant factor than any other kind of school resource. High quality early childhood education and parental enrichment programs can make a difference for children in the longer term.

In addition, education has been subjected to much more public scrutiny and evaluation because of concerns about student behaviour and values, attainment standards, job opportunities and the cost of making reasonable educational provision for all children.

Over the 1990s, Australian school education systems have adopted an outcomes approach to curriculum and school endeavour in general. Maintaining the balance between the need to ensuring the effectiveness of schooling as a publicly-funded enterprise and affirming and supporting the professional status of teachers, emerged as an issue requiring close attention in the 1990s.

Curricular and assessment practices in all jurisdictions have been revised, in most cases more than once. The educational use of information and communication technologies is in its infancy, but firmly established. Other initiatives, related to a range of topics but most notably to vocational education and training, have taken their place in school programmes. Educators have also responded to requests for assistance in solving a variety of significant social problems.

These changes have increased pressure on the quality of teachers and teacher education programs. At the same time, criticisms of teacher education are widespread, comprehensive and diverse: too much/too little theory, inadequate practicums, poor teaching models, tensions between university and school-based supervisors or mentors, poor understanding of curriculum management, and conflicting or inconsistent expectations of students.

In the last decade, raising the quality and status of teaching and the quality of initial teacher education has been the subject of numerous overseas and Commonwealth and State government reports and enquiries and initiatives.

Senate Inquiry report into the status of teachers

The Senate Inquiry report into the status of teachers and entitled *A Class Act* (1998) provides considerable advice on the causes of the decline in the status of teachers and the widespread crisis of morale amongst teachers. Low morale amongst teachers works against quality teaching.

Perceptions in the community about the low tertiary entrance requirements for teacher training, and the low status accorded in this country to children, contribute to this state of affairs. As well, the feminisation of the profession - that is the high percentage of women teachers – means that

prejudiced views about the value of women's work are also a factor. Few teachers recommend a teaching career to their children or their brightest students. Some are even ashamed to admit to being teachers. While teachers themselves value their work they believe it is not understood, appreciated or supported in the general community.

In addition, there were criticisms that teacher training courses do little to prepare people specifically for teaching in smaller country schools or to familiarise students with the particular issues facing Indigenous students. Concerns were raised about whether Indigenous studies should be a mandatory unit in teacher education programmes.

The Senate Inquiry report into the status of teachers drew on the data supplied in submissions and at public hearings to develop a profile of the Australian teaching force. See **Box 1** for further details.

Box 1: Profile of the Australian teaching force

A teacher in Australia is likely to be in his/her mid forties. Almost half the teaching workforce is four year trained. Another quarter is currently upgrading its qualifications. Over 50% of secondary teachers are female and this proportion increases to around 75% of primary teachers.

Teachers are most likely to leave the profession within the first two years, or after 10 to 15 years of service. Those who stay on will probably retire between the ages of 55 and 60.

The majority reach the top of their salary scale within 10 years. Promotion opportunities are limited and in most cases lead out of the classroom. Promotional opportunities continue to favour males, despite the large proportion of females in the teaching workforce.

Very few teachers are from non English speaking backgrounds. While still small in number, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teaching force is increasing as a result of government initiatives designed to recruit and train more teachers from this group. Retention of Aboriginal teachers remains a problem. Contract employment is increasingly replacing permanent employment.

A significant proportion of people beginning teacher training do not embark on their teaching careers directly from school. The vast majority entering initial teacher education in the secondary area are already graduates, and in some universities are taking out their initial teaching qualification at Masters level. Universities also enrol other professionals into teacher education courses through recognition of prior learning provisions.

Initial teacher training

Teacher training takes a variety of forms in Australia. The most common are either a four year teacher training course at university, leading to a Bachelor of Education degree (previously often three years, but now being replaced by four year courses) or a three year arts or science degree followed by a one year Diploma in Education. Some universities are now considering replacing the one year post graduate Diploma course with a two year Bachelor of Education course. In addition, universities accept into their teaching courses applicants from other professions, through recognition of prior learning and credit transfer.

The most trenchant criticism of teacher training relates to its practical component. Practicums are often (but not always) concentrated towards the end of a teacher training course. For four year education students this sometimes means they receive no practical experience until their third year. For post graduate diploma students it means waiting until their third term.

This means that some students, confronted for the first time with the reality of classroom teaching, decided it was not for them and left the course. Had they been exposed to classroom teaching earlier they would have saved both themselves and universities significant time and effort. The

training of those who remained could also have been enhanced by reference to greater practical experience, in both urban and rural/remote locations.

The proportion of teacher training time spent in practicums has also declined, with a minimum requirement of 80 days now suggested. The decline is a result of cost constraints within universities. University education faculties pay school teachers for supervising trainee teachers during their practicums. Payment is made by universities out of their general operating funds. Although the actual costs per student are modest, the cost to education faculties is significant, at a time of declining resources. The Council of Deans of Education estimate that payment to supervising teachers absorbs an average of 25% of the budgets of education faculties.

One response to current perceived inadequacies in initial teacher education - and especially to its lack of attention to practical teaching – is to suggest that teacher education be moved out of universities altogether and conducted in schools in the form of an apprenticeship. In Britain, for example, pre-service training of teachers has become more school-based in recent years, although there is no consensus on the advantages and disadvantages of this new focus and much opposition from higher education institutions. One important aspect of identifying good teachers would seem to be getting them in front of a class early in their training in a form of apprenticeship. This would require existing teachers to be given time to train new teachers on the job and not in a tertiary institute well removed from real classroom practice.

Others argue that moving teacher education out of universities and into schools would diminish the quality and status of the training and, as a consequence, of the profession more generally. Location of teacher education in universities is seen as a way of ensuring that the theoretical base is provided and the research context is maintained

The Senate Inquiry acknowledged the importance of ensuring that practical teaching skills are firmly embedded in a sound theoretical and research base and proposed that different models of practicums should be more widely considered:

- internships for student teachers nearing the end of their training, during which they work almost full time in schools with gradually declining levels of supervision; or
- a model which combines two days a week at university with three days a week at a school (or variations of these arrangements) over a lengthy period.

Social justice concerns

The 1999 National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century (Adelaide Declaration) sets clear and agreed directions for school education in Australia. The goals focus on enhancing educational outcomes for all students. They support the pursuit of excellence, seek to enable a diverse range of educational choices and reflect the entitlement of all young Australians to high quality schooling.

In particular, the National Goals for Schooling state that schooling should be socially just, so that:

- 'students outcomes from schooling are free from the negative forms of discrimination based on sex, language, culture and ethnicity, religion or disability; and of differences arising from students' socio-economic background or geographic isolation' (3.1);

- 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students have equitable access to, and opportunities in, schooling so that their learning outcomes improve, and over time, match those of other students' (3.3);

- 'all students have access to the high quality education necessary to enable completion of school education to year 12 or its vocational equivalent and that provides clear and recognised pathways to employment and further education and training' (3.6);

and in terms of curriculum, 'students should be numerate and able to read, write, spell and communicate at an appropriate level'.

The outcomes-based approach to schooling has the potential to effect improvements in the education and attainments of students from educationally disadvantaged groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The extent to which this potential will be realised depends largely on the ways in which teacher education students are encouraged to commit to social justice together with the effectiveness of the strategies with which they are provided. This, in turn, requires a commitment from the institutions to expose students to appropriate content and pedagogies in their pre-service programs.

The outcomes-based approach changes the notion of 'equity' from 'equity of inputs' to 'equity of educational outcomes'. Nevertheless participants at the World Indigenous Peoples' Conference on Education in 1999 commented that many Australian educators believe that 'equity' for Indigenous students means that they receive exactly the same education in the same form in the same classroom context as every other Australian child, ie 'equity of inputs' rather than 'equity of educational outcomes'.

It is not surprising then to find that studies show that Australian teachers and teacher educators are often ill-equipped to deal with a diverse clientele in their own teaching situations. It is likely that many supervising teachers and teacher educators are insensitive to the need to prepare students for diversity and simply exclude such concerns from either their classroom teaching or unit offerings. Even when issues of diversity are addressed, it is possible that attention may be pedagogically and substantively inappropriate.

It is recognised that a critical factor in the performance of Indigenous students at all sectors can be the knowledge and understanding held by teachers. To develop a better understanding of the issues a project funded under the DETYA Evaluations and Investigations Programme has been established to critically evaluate the impact of a pre service core Aboriginal Studies course on practicing teachers' abilities to appreciate, understand and effectively teach Aboriginal Studies, Aboriginal perspectives, and Aboriginal children in Australian schools.

The general tenor of teaching and learning practice in Australian schools is to shift teaching methods towards the facilitation of active, independent learning by individual or groups of students in contexts that simulate later life. The work on Key Competencies in the mid-1990s added two things to this general movement: it focussed and made explicit the connection between school learning and lifelong learning; and it did this by identifying an interlocking set of competencies most of which will be engaged in any realistic, complex learning task.

Despite this work, there is little if any available advice on how to develop a range of tools that allow educators to cater within the classroom for the linguistic and cultural diversity of students and their lifelong learning needs.

Current work

Over the last decade most States and Territories have established mechanisms to support teacher quality (for example, the Western Australian Centre for Excellence in Teaching, the Queensland

Learning and Development Foundation and the former Victorian Standards Council of the Teaching Profession).

In addition State and Territory government and non-government teacher employers are reviewing a range of issues relating to the status and quality of teachers (for example, the review of teacher education in New South Wales) and in some instances have moved or are moving to establish structures (for example, the Institute of Teaching in Victoria) to support the teaching profession.

In 1998, MCEETYA established a Taskforce on Teacher Preparation and Recruitment to provide advice to Ministers on:

1. teacher preparation aimed at improving the quality and standard of teaching and learning, including the preparation of teachers for Indigenous education;
2. employer recognition of teacher training courses and voluntary certification proposals for recognising advanced skills or higher levels of skills;
3. areas and strategies for retraining and development focussing on areas of identified demand such as middle schooling, IT within and across subject areas, LOTE, ESL and emerging sciences;
4. the articulation of preservice training, retraining and upgrading with ongoing professional learning including recognition of current competencies and of higher level attributes;
5. recommended professional standards and skills base for entry to the profession and ongoing development of general and subject specific advanced skills;
6. further recruitment marketing projects commenced by the National Teacher Recruitment Strategy Taskforce.

The Taskforce understands that work is underway to provide advice on competencies for beginning school teachers.

While there is a range of views on how the quality and status of the teaching profession might be improved there is a general consensus that more needs to be done to:

- improve initial teacher education and ongoing development;
- more carefully target professional development to meet school and individual needs; and
- promote the value and development of teaching standards and related certification.

The Taskforce notes that most of this work does not specifically address issues for teachers of Indigenous students. The Taskforce considered that it was timely to develop a discussion paper and promote a draft set of professional standards for accomplished teachers of Indigenous students in early childhood services and schools to inform current discussions about the quality of teaching and teaching education programs.

CHAPTER TWO: INDIGENOUS EDUCATION ISSUES

This chapter summarises a range of advice relating to the educational achievement of Indigenous students and the previous work of the Taskforce.

Introduction

It is well recognised that while there has been considerable progress to date to improve Indigenous educational achievements in Australia, the level of educational disadvantage that Indigenous peoples continue to experience is still too high.

However current advice on the effectiveness of schooling and reporting on student educational outcomes, particularly through the national literacy benchmarks, has highlighted the difficulties that some Indigenous children continue to experience in achieving national standards, especially in the early years of schooling.

Educational attainment issues for Indigenous children

Indigenous children are much less likely to participate in formal early childhood education. The number of Indigenous students attending pre-school increased from 1986 to 1996 both as a proportion of total students attending pre-school and in total numbers, yet the estimated Indigenous participation as a proportion of the cohort of Indigenous children aged 3-4 years decreased from 53% in 1991 to 41% in 1996.

The 1996 National School English Literacy Survey showed that approximately 70% of all students in year 3 surveyed met the identified performance standards in reading and writing. Less that 20% of students in the Indigenous sample met the reading standards and less that 30% of students in the Indigenous sample met the writing standards. In addition the lowest achieving year 3 Indigenous students make little or no progress over the following two years. There was a similar trend for year 5 students. Over time this situation deteriorates to the point where many Indigenous students are often 3 to 4 year levels below other students and students leave school with the English literacy level of a six-year old.

This poor performance is not just a reflection of socio-economic and English language background, since 60% to 70% of Year 3 students from low socio-economic backgrounds and just over 60% with a language background other than English met the reading and writing standards.

The release of the 1999 National Year 3 reading data showed that almost 87% of Australian Year 3 students and 66% of Indigenous Year 3 students met the national standard in reading.

While the 1996 and 1999 results are not directly comparable for Indigenous students because of different sampling techniques, the 1999 results are a dramatic improvement on the 1996 figures – from less than 20% to 66% meeting the standard. But these results also show that nationally one third of Indigenous students are still below the standard. There is considerable State and Territory variation in the proportion of Indigenous students failing to meet the standard.

Indigenous children are much less likely to continue their education to the end of the compulsory years. Only 83% of Indigenous students remained in schooling to year 10 in 1998, compared to just under 100% for non-Indigenous students. This year 10 retention rate varies considerably across the country and in some parts of the country was just over 50% in 1997.

Indigenous students are also much less likely to continue their education beyond the compulsory years. Only about 36% of Indigenous students remain at school from the commencement of their secondary schooling to year 12, compared to about 73% of non-Indigenous students in 2000. In addition, in some parts of the country, in 1997, only a quarter of these year 12 students may successfully complete year 12, compared to 50% of non-Indigenous Year 12 students.

The 1994 ACER study on subject choice in years 11 and 12 and more recent trend data shows that early school achievement is a significant influence on enrolments in particular subject areas and therefore on post–school options. High achievement in the early years of schooling in either literacy or numeracy was associated with considerably higher enrolment levels in the physical sciences, mathematics and LOTE in Years 11 and 12. The reverse was true for technology, The Arts and physical education subjects.

Students who achieve at the highest level of literacy are more than three times as likely to study either physics or chemistry. Students who achieve at the highest level of numeracy are more than eight times as likely to study either physics or chemistry. It is not surprising then that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are enrolled in higher proportions than other Australian students in the following: the Arts, Technology, Health and Physical Education, with enrolments in physical education more than double for other Australian students.

These continuing difficulties that Indigenous students experience in achieving educational equality impact on their future education, as well as their post-school options and employment rate. One of the major labour market disadvantages experienced by Indigenous people is their relatively low level of education. If Indigenous people had the same level of qualification observed in the rest of the community, then their rate of employment could expect to increase significantly and they would experience greater levels of economic independence.

Population statistics

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the Indigenous population of Australia is younger and growing at a faster rate compared to other Australians. Accordingly, existing concerns about the educational outcomes of Indigenous children are likely to increase as the population expands in proportion to other Australian children.

The Australian population is about 18 million (1996 Census), with about 2.6 million children aged 0 to 9 years. The Australian Total Fertility rate has been declining from 3.6 children per woman (1948-1961) to its lowest recorded level of 1.74 in 1998. For example, the number of children in the 0 to 4 years age cohort dropped by about 13 500 from 1996 to 1998. The rate varies considerably by education level and geographic area, although the trend is to a decline across all social groups, reflecting the delay of family formation and the increase in the percentage of women remaining childless.

In addition, the average size of Australian households has been falling steadily across the last 20 years. The proportion of one-parent families is increasing, but the major component of the overall change is the rise in the proportion of couple-only families. In 1976, 60% of families were comprised of couples with children. By 1996 this group had dropped to 50% of the 7 million households in the nation. Assuming the trend in fertility continues and total migration remains at its current level, these trends would translate into a drop of between 5% to 7% in the population of children over the next decade.

However, Australia's Indigenous population has grown from about 116 000 in 1971 to about 353 000 in 1996 and now comprises about 2% of the total population. The 1996 Census also showed that the Indigenous population is currently expanding at a rate more than twice that of the total population, with an average growth rate of around 2.3%. The population is projected to grow at over 20% to 469,000 in 2001.

The age structure of the non-Indigenous Australian population is significantly different to that of the Indigenous Australian population. The Indigenous population is comparatively young, while the non-Indigenous population has an older profile with a large concentration in middle-age. 70% of Indigenous Australians are under 25 years of age, compared to about 45% of all Australians, according to the 1996 Census.

In 1996, there were about 98 000 Indigenous children aged 0 to 8 years, with projected estimates of about 147 000 Indigenous children aged 0 to 8 years in 2006, an increase of about 49 000 in a decade. The projected number of Indigenous births is likely to increase from 12 000 in the 1996-7 period to 17 000 by 2005-6.

There are about 107 000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in school in 1999 out of a total school population of about 3.2 million.

National work to accelerate progress

All State and Territory Governments and the Commonwealth Government work at a national level through the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (otherwise known as MCEETYA). MCEETYA recognises that Australia's Indigenous people are 'the most educationally disadvantaged group in the community' and has undertaken a number of collaborative activities, particularly in the last decade, to address the educational needs of Australia's Indigenous people.

Two important and identifiable phases of work have been undertaken to support the achievement of educational equality for Indigenous students. The first phase was the establishment of national commitment to a raft of policy in Indigenous education, particularly the 1989 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy (AEP) and the 1989 National Goals of Schooling (Hobart Declaration).

In the second phase, Indigenous education led the way in establishing an outcomes-based approach in Australian education.

In 1995, MCEETYA established a number of priority areas and agreed to an outcomes focus for this work. The priorities for the Council were in areas such as literacy and numeracy, involving Indigenous parents in their children's education, employment of Indigenous education workers, appropriate professional development of staff, increasing the enrolments of Indigenous students, expanding culturally inclusive curricula and involvement of Indigenous Australians in educational decision-making. Ministers agreed to ensure significant continuous improvements to achieve outcomes for Indigenous Australians similar to those of non-Indigenous Australians.

Further, Ministers agreed in 1997 to a National Literacy and Numeracy Goal, ie that every child leaving primary school should be numerate, and be able to read, write and spell at an appropriate level, and that every child commencing school from 1998 will achieve a minimum acceptable literacy and numeracy standard within four years.

To increase the focus on progressing the national Indigenous education agenda, Ministers agreed in May 1998 to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education as a permanent item on the Council's agenda.

In 1999, consistent with MCEETYA's previous decision regarding the National Literacy and Numeracy Goal, Ministers committed to ensuring that all Indigenous children leaving primary school should be numerate, and able to read, write and spell at an appropriate level, and that every Indigenous child commencing school from 1998 should achieve a minimum acceptable literacy and numeracy standard within four years.

In 1999, Ministers also agreed to the Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the 21st Century, which states that 'Australia's future depends upon each citizen having the necessary knowledge, understanding, skills and values for a productive and rewarding life in an educated, just and open society. High quality schooling is central to achieving this vision'. In particular, the Adelaide Declaration underlines the capacity of all young people to learn, the role of parents as the first educators of their children, the achievement of educational standards, especially in literacy and numeracy, and the need for schooling to be socially just.

The Adelaide Declaration addresses the individual child's rights to education in a statement of expectations about what all students should have on leaving school and articulates these to a set of social justice commitments encompassing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education issues. The Declaration also points out that schooling should provide a foundation for young Australians' intellectual, physical, social, moral, spiritual and aesthetic development in a supportive and nurturing environment.

Despite this level of national policy work, progress in achieving equality in educational outcomes has been slower than anticipated.

In its report to MCEETYA on 31 March 2000, the Taskforce identified a number of issues that are impeding the achievement of educational equality for Indigenous Australians. These issues include:

Despite considerable work over the last decade, progress in achieving educational equality has been slower than anticipated. The Taskforce has identified a number of issues that are impeding the achievement of educational equality. These issues include:

- lingering perceptions and mindsets in some quarters of the Australian community that the gap in educational outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australian students is 'normal' and that educational equality for Indigenous Australians is either not achievable, or if possible, only achievable over a long period of time (ie decades or generations);

- a systemic lack of optimism and belief in educational success for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The provision and delivery of educational services to Indigenous and non-Indigenous students at the local level often varies according to expectations of the ability of Indigenous students to achieve academically;

- concerns that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and education workers are denied access to facilities and services that other teachers and education workers take for granted and which are covered by legislation especially those relating to occupational health and safety, equal employment opportunity and racial vilification;

- education of Indigenous students is often not regarded as an area of core business. Indigenous programmes are often marginalised, with little movement between Indigenous and mainstream programme;

- initiatives that develop more effective models of education which build on, replicate and sustain progress in the achievement of equitable and appropriate educational outcomes for Indigenous students often fail to be implemented systemically and/or at the local level;

- acknowledgement of a close relationship between low levels of Indigenous educational outcomes and poverty, health, housing and access to government services and infrastructure, but there is a lack of efficient and effective mechanisms to address cross-portfolio issues for Indigenous students;

- schools need to work better with parents of Indigenous students to develop strong partnerships that progress high standards of education and ensure active involvement in the decision-making processes.

Previous Taskforce advice

At their March 2000 meeting, all Australian Ministers of Education agreed to undertake a third phase of work to accelerate progress and address these issues. This work included the promotion and implementation of:

- a statement of principles and standards for educational infrastructure and service delivery;
- a model for more culturally inclusive and educationally effective schools; and
- a framework for developing more efficient and effective cross-portfolio mechanisms.

The Statement of Principles and Standards for More Culturally Inclusive Schooling in the 21st Century is designed to progress high standards of education and increase community expectations about the quality of teaching of Indigenous students. The full text of the Statement is provided at **Appendix 2**.

The statement is closely tied to the Adelaide Declaration and uses the national goals to underpin the set of principles and standards. The principles are described in terms of rights of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to high quality schooling and the rights and responsibilities of parents as the first educators of their children.

Principle 1.2 states that 'schooling acknowledges the capacity of all young Indigenous people to learn by establishing effective teaching/learning relationships between the educator and the Indigenous learner.

Principle 1.6 states that 'schooling acknowledges the capacity of all young Indigenous people to learn by providing a curriculum which:

(i) is free from the negative forms of discrimination based on sex, language, culture and ethnicity, religion or disability; and of differences arising from Indigenous students' socio-economic background or geographic isolation,

(ii) allows Indigenous students to share in the same educational opportunities experienced by other Australian students and at the same time allows them to be strong in their own culture and language and reposition their cultures, languages, histories, beliefs and lifestyles in a way which affirms identity and the ability to operate in cross-cultural situations,

(iii) supports all students to understand and acknowledge the value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures to Australian society and possess the knowledge, skills and understanding to contribute to, and benefit from, reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.'

Implementation of the statement has raised issues about teacher quality and teacher professional development.

Current work

In March 2000, Ministers asked the Taskforce to provide advice to Council at its first meeting in 2001 on making the achievement of educational equality for Australia's Indigenous peoples an urgent national priority in a number of sectors, including the early childhood and higher education sectors.

The Taskforce considered the considerable work already underway in this sector by the CESCEO Early Childhood Education Working Party and the OECD Thematic Review of Early Childhood Education and Care Provision in Australia, and also undertook further work to identify issues and gaps.

The CESCEO Early Childhood Education Working Party report (October 2000) proposes 6 essential beliefs and understandings that should underpin the provision of high quality learning environments for children in the early years. These six 'essential beliefs and understandings' are:

1. all children are capable, resourceful and valuable in their own right;
2. all children have the right to realise their potential and all can succeed given the appropriate support and resources;
3. children learn best when their diversity of experience, in home and community is recognised and built upon in other settings;
4. the role of the family and community is critical in children's learning and development;
5. children's successful development transcends sectoral boundaries and includes children learning and developing in all settings;
6. the role of the early childhood educator and the relevance of early childhood curriculum are critical factors in influencing children's learning and development.

Within this set of essential beliefs and understandings, the CESCEO paper recognises that children bring a diversity of experience to new learning situations, that some children need additional support and resources to overcome disadvantage and that appropriate early intervention enhances children's disposition to learn.

The Taskforce focussed on these 'essential beliefs and understandings' and expanded on them in relation to a range of health and educational issues for Indigenous children from 0 to 8 years. In a separate paper entitled *Solid Foundations: Health and Education Partnership for Indigenous Children Aged 0 To 8 Years*, the Taskforce has examined nine health issues of concern to the Taskforce that affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from birth to 8 years and proposes them as the basis for initial discussion with health sector representatives. These issues are: lower life expectancy at birth; low birthweight and malnutrition; poor quality diet; high disease rates, especially chronic ear and respiratory infections; mental health; substance abuse; adolescent pregnancy; childhood trauma; and childhood injuries.

The Taskforce acknowledges the current synergies operating in the school and early childhood sectors to improve the educational outcomes of Indigenous children, especially in terms of literacy and numeracy. At the same time, the Taskforce recognises that there are a range of further issues that need to be addressed to ensure the achievement of MCEETYA's commitment to ensuring that all Indigenous children leaving primary school are numerate, and able to read, write and spell at an appropriate level, and that every Indigenous child commencing school from 1998 should achieve a minimum acceptable literacy and numeracy standard within four years.

In a separate paper entitled *Effective Learning Issues for Indigenous Children aged 0 to 8 Years,* the Taskforce has summarised advice on early childhood service provision and access, development and learning stages, cultural and linguistic diversity, literacy and numeracy, and the importance of mutual community capacity building. In addition the paper identifies five issues of concern:

- high quality early childhood education and parental enrichment programs can make a difference for children in the longer term. However there are continuing concerns about the level of provision of these programs, and the low levels of access and participation in them by Indigenous children and their parents and caregivers;

- there is a continuing tension between, and an uneven transition from, early childhood practices to the primary school curriculum which affects the development and educational outcomes of children in general and exacerbates transitional difficulties for Indigenous children in particular;

- educators need to have a better pedagogical understanding of children's diversity of experience and diverse cultural capital to ensure that early childhood services and schooling better reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of Australian society;

- educators need to have a better pedagogical understanding of how the literacy and numeracy development of children takes place, especially for Indigenous multi-linguals and speakers of English as a second or foreign language, that at the same time avoids any consideration of 'Indigenous learning styles';

- children learn most effectively when there is a partnership between parents/caregivers and educators, when there is a sense of community between home and school environments. The general level of interaction between schools and the local Indigenous communities is often poor.

Discussion about these health and educational matters of concern has raised issues about the quality of teachers of Indigenous children in early childhood services and schools.

CHAPTER THREE: PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FOR TEACHERS

This chapter summarises educator quality movements within the early childhood education and care sector and schooling sector and describes a draft set of professional standards for accomplished teachers of Indigenous students to inform current discussions within jurisdictions about the quality of teaching and teaching education program.

Introduction

In Australia, the primary focus of government educational improvement strategies has been on curriculum standards for most of the past two decades; this is now shifting to a focus on the quality and standard of teachers and teaching. In the last decade, teacher education has been the subject of numerous overseas and Commonwealth and State government reports and enquiries which have attempted to set directions and describe strategies for raising the quality of initial teacher education. This focus on the quality of teaching is a much more complex issue than curriculum standards.

It is well recognised that teacher quality is a critical factor in the performance of Indigenous students in early childhood services and schools and that there is a direct link between teacher quality and Indigenous student learning outcomes. Evidence from recent work in Indigenous education has shown that teachers can accelerate the achievement of educational equality for Indigenous students by combining a relentless approach with high expectations, good teaching and learning practice and a focus on performance indicators in literacy, numeracy and attendance.

International work on teacher quality and standards

An array of work is being undertaken internationally in relation to teacher quality and standards, especially in the US, England and Canada. The work underway in US, England and Canada provide three different approaches to implementing a process whereby teachers may be accredited against acceptable standards.

In England, three separate agencies are now involved in the development, monitoring and accreditation of teachers against educational standards:

- Teacher Training Agency: standards for the award of qualified teacher status induction, special educational co-ordinators, specialist teachers and subject leaders;
- Office for Standards in Education: monitoring of educational standards in schools;
- General Teaching Council established in 2000 is designed to be an independent professional body for all teachers.

In Ontario, Canada, the Ontario College of Teachers has been established to develop standards of practice for the teaching profession, ethical standards for the teaching profession; and guidelines for the accreditation of teacher education programs.

In the US, four agencies are developing standards:

- National Board for Professional Teaching Standards: standards for accomplished teachers;
- National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education: standards for teacher education;
- Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium: standards for beginning teachers;

- Council of Chief State School Officers & Interstate School Leaders Consortium: standards for school leaders.

US National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

The US National Board of Professional Teaching Standards was established in 1987, with the support of state and federal political leaders, teacher unions and associations, employing authorities, and corporate leaders. It was meticulous in taking the time to consult widely in an attempt to get the processes right. Consequently, the first group of Board certified 'master teachers' were not announced till 1995. Since 1995 more than a thousand teachers have gained Board certification.

Statements of standards are developed by members of the profession and ratified through extensive consultation. The NBPTS approach to standards avoids the trap of developing checklists that atomise teachers' knowledge and skills. Then national subject teaching associations (including, for example, those for English, Mathematics and Music) take these and after their own extensive consultation within their fields, write up subject-specific professional teaching standards within each of the four specific teaching contexts: Early Childhood; Middle Childhood; Early Adolescent; Adolescent and Young Adulthood – and for generalist teachers, or teachers of specialist subject areas.

Teachers volunteer to apply for National Board accreditation: it is not mandatory. Applicants pay a US$3,000 lodgement fee. They supply a comprehensive portfolio of evidence to support their application. Teachers report that preparation of their portfolios was the most valuable professional development experience that they had ever had. Subsequently they are interviewed rigorously by the assessment team (appointed on merit by the NBPTS following tendering processes). Only one-third of all applicants has been successful: those who miss out do not recover their application fee.

Steadily increasing numbers of education authorities are accepting Board certification as evidence of professional development and a basis for salary differentials. Six states and fourteen districts provide salary supplements for Board certification, eleven states recognise Board certification for license renewal and continuing education units, and thirteen states accept it for license portability purposes.

The standards for accomplished teachers by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards are defined around a core of five propositions about teachers:

1. commitment to students and their learning;
2. knowledge of the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students;
3. responsibility for managing and monitoring student learning;
4. systematic reflection on their practice and learning from experience;
5. membership of learning communities.

The National Board's standards are different from most other teaching standards. Rather than providing lists of tasks or competencies, which are relatively decontextualised, they give descriptors setting out expectations of accomplished professionals. They are both subject and school-stage specific and require performance-based assessment of teachers. When completed there will be 26 statements of standards, such as those for early childhood/generalist (ages 3-8) and early adolescence/science (ages 11-15). A full description of the standards is provided in **Box 2**.

Box 2: US National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

The 5 National Board core propositions define the knowledge, skills, dispositions and commitments that distinguish highly accomplished teachers:

1. **Teachers are committed to students and their learning**

Accomplished teachers are dedicated to making knowledge accessible to all students. They act on the belief that all students can learn. They treat students equitably, recognising the individual differences that distinguish one student form another and taking account of these differences in their practice. They adjust their practice based on observation and knowledge of their students' interests, abilities, skills, knowledge, family circumstances and peer relationships. Accomplished teachers understand how students develop and learn. They incorporate the prevailing theories of cognition and intelligence in their practice. They are aware of the influence of context and culture on behaviour. They develop students' cognitive capacity and their respect for learning. Equally important, they foster students' self-esteem, motivation, character, civic responsibility and their respect for individual, cultural, religious and racial differences.

2. **Teachers know the subject(s) they teach and how to teach those subjects to students**

Accomplished teachers have a rich understanding of the subject(s) they teach and appreciate how knowledge in their subject is created, organised, linked to other disciplines and applied to real-world settings. While faithfully representing the collective wisdom of our culture and upholding the value of disciplinary knowledge, they also develop the critical and analytical capacities of their students. Accomplished teachers command specialised knowledge of how to convey and reveal subject matter to students. They are aware of the preconceptions and background knowledge that students typically bring to each subject and of strategies and instructional materials that can be of assistance. They understand where difficulties are likely to arise and modify their practice accordingly. Their instructional repertoire allows them to create multiple paths to the subjects they teach, and they are adept at teaching students how to pose and solve their own problems.

3. **Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning**

Accomplished teachers create, enrich, maintain and alter instructional settings to capture and sustain the interest of their students and to make the most effective use of time. They are adept at engaging students and adults to assist their teaching, and at enlisting their colleagues' knowledge and expertise to complement their own. Accomplished teachers command a range of generic instructional techniques, know when these are appropriate and can implement them as needed. They are as aware of ineffectual or damaging practice as they are devoted to elegant practice. They know how to engage groups of students to ensure a disciplined learning environment, and how to organise instruction to allow the schools' goals for students to be met. They are adept at setting norms for social interaction among students and between students and teachers. They understand how to motivate students to learn and how to maintain their interest even in the face of temporary failure. Accomplished teachers can assess the progress of individual students as well as that of the class as a whole. They employ multiple methods for measuring student growth and understanding and can clearly explain student performance to parents.

4. **Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience**

Accomplished teachers are models of educated persons, exemplifying the virtues they seek to inspire in students -- curiosity, tolerance, honesty, fairness, respect for diversity and appreciation of cultural differences -- and the capacities that are prerequisites for intellectual growth: the ability to reason and take multiple perspectives to be creative and take risks, and to adopt an experimental and problem-solving orientation.

Accomplished teachers draw on their knowledge of human development, subject matter and instruction, and their understanding of their students to make principled judgments about sound practice. Their decisions are not only grounded in the literature, but also in their experience. They engage in lifelong learning which they seek to encourage in their students. Striving to strengthen their teaching, accomplished teachers critically examine their practice, seek to expand their repertoire, deepen their knowledge, sharpen their judgment and adapt their teaching to new findings, ideas and theories.

5. **Teachers are members of learning communities**

Accomplished teachers contribute to the effectiveness of the school by working collaboratively with other professionals on instructional policy, curriculum development and staff development. They can evaluate school progress and the allocation of school resources in light of their understanding of state and local educational objectives. They are knowledgeable about specialized school and community resources that can be engaged for their students' benefit, and are skilled at employing such resources as needed. Accomplished teachers find ways to work collaboratively and creatively with parents, engaging them productively in the work of the school.

Evidence from the US National Board for Professional Teaching Standards shows a direct link between teacher quality and student learning outcomes. Those US states that repeatedly lead the nation in student achievement in mathematics and reading have among the most highly qualified teachers in the country and have made longstanding investments in the quality of teaching. Reform strategies that do not include substantial efforts to improve the nature and quality of classroom work have shown little success in raising student achievement, especially if reforms rely primarily on student testing rather than investment in teaching.

Work in Australia on teacher quality and standards

In Australia, while professional standards have been the subject of educational policy discussion since the late 1980s, less progress has been made on their prescription here than overseas.

National developments in the last decade have included the national competency framework for beginning teachers and the national standards and guidelines for initial teacher education (Australian Council of Deans of Education, 1998), as well as the short lived Australian Teaching Council. In addition, the MCEETYA Taskforce on Teacher Preparation and Recruitment is preparing advice on beginning teachers.

In Victoria, an advisory committee will report in mid-2001 on the establishment of a Victorian Institute of Teaching with the power to establish professional standards, to register teachers and to support professional development for teachers. In Qld and SA, teachers are registered and these registration arrangements are being evaluated.

In WA, a Level 3 classroom teacher competency project is underway to implement assessment of teacher competence. The process seeks to assess teachers capable of leadership in the school environment against five competencies:

1. utilise innovative and/or exemplary teaching strategies and techniques in order to more effectively meet the learning needs of individual students, groups and/or classes of students;
2. employ consistent exemplary practice in developing and implementing student assessment and reporting activities;
3. engage in a variety of self-development activities, including a consistent high level of critical reflection on one's own teaching practice and teacher leadership, to sustain a high level of ongoing professional growth;
4. enhance other teachers' professional knowledge and skills through employing effective development strategies;
5. provide high level leadership in the school community through assuming a key role in school development processes including curriculum planning and management and school policy formulation.

The assessment process includes maintaining a teacher portfolio and a reflective review.

NSW review of teacher education

In NSW in 1999, a Review of Teacher Education was commissioned to address four critical issues: quality of teachers and learning; implications of technology for pedagogy; behaviour management in schools and classrooms; and the practicum and the professional experience of teachers. The Review was undertaken by Dr Gregor Ramsey and reported in November 2000.

The Ramsey report refers to the considerable amount of previous work and the high degree of support for many of the recommendations of previous reviews and points out that these have been unable to generate the momentum necessary to effect the changes needed. To avoid meeting a similar fate, a number of principles were established for the operation of the Review and these included:

1. the process was to be as important as the outcomes, by developing a momentum for change;
2. the outcomes must mean that the preparation of teachers would meet the needs of teachers and schools;
3. the views of teachers, parents, students and employers must be given equal consideration with those of teacher educators and universities;
4. preparing quality teachers is the responsibility of the whole university, school systems, and the profession, not only teacher educators.

The report highlighted the need to improve the transition from teacher-in-training to fully-fledged teacher. A professional structure, such as an Institute of Teachers, with responsibility for standards and working with universities and employers to define their respective responsibilities in teacher education, would have an important role in enabling this important transition to occur more effectively than is the case at present. The Review took the view that it would be inappropriate to outline any particular set of standards, since these should be for the profession to develop through the proposed Institute of Teachers. The NSW DET's response to the findings of the review is underway and is due to report in August 2001.

Teaching profession activities

In addition to this work being undertaken by jurisdictions, the teaching profession is also undertaking work in relation to educator professional standards.

For example, in 1999, the Australian Primary Principals Association undertook a survey of its members to identify principals' perceptions, experiences and suggestions on how to improve Indigenous student learning outcomes. The survey looked at four key school and community improvement areas: local school issues; school and community issues; school staff issues; and student learning issues.

The findings of the survey were summarised in a report entitled *Partnering A Better Future* (2000). Principals see the challenges facing Indigenous education as being synonymous with the challenges facing an evolving Australian community. In particular, the survey found that:

- the general level of interaction between schools and the local Indigenous communities needs further work if Indigenous student learning outcomes are to improve. Most schools had little interaction with their Indigenous communities;

- developing a specific school focus on the purpose and goals for education of Indigenous students in consultation with the local Indigenous community was critical in promoting positive relationships and shared understanding of school goals and the value of education;

- principals identified literacy and numeracy teaching skills and methods, together with greater professional development opportunities for their teaching staff and Indigenous education workers, as critical.

In 2000, a National Discussion Paper on Standards of Professional Practice for Accomplished Teaching in Australian Classrooms was released to stimulate discussion (ACSA, ACE & AARE).

Quality of early childhood services

A Quality Improvement and Accreditation System (QIAS) was established for long day care centres in 1994. Australia is unique in having a national accreditation system for its long day care centres that is directly tied to the provision of funding, with over 98% of centres participating. The National Childcare Accreditation Council oversees the QIAS. The QIAS is currently under review by the Commonwealth Child Care Advisory Council. In addition, the Commonwealth is currently supporting the development of pilot quality assurance systems for family day care and outside school hours care, whilst the New South Wales Office of Child Care is funding a pilot accreditation program for preschools.

The Quality Improvement and Accreditation System focuses on the standard of care and education that actually exists in every Australian long day care centre. The Quality Improvement and Accreditation System looks at the factors that actually determine quality – that is, to gauge whether quality care is in fact being provided.

QIAS recognises that while laws and regulations are essential for good quality care, they are not on their own sufficient to guarantee it. By emphasising the actual outcomes for children, it shifts the focus from meeting minimum standards to striving towards the highest level of care.

Good quality care must appreciate the individuality of every child and treat all children equally. Staff providing the best level of care will be sensitive to and give equal weight to each child's ideas, emotions, interests and needs, including the special needs of children with disabilities, children from non-English speaking backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and talented or gifted children.

Good quality care must also draw from a sound base of knowledge about early childhood development and the characteristics common to children of different age groups. Staff providing the best level of care will know what are appropriate activities for, and appropriate expectations of, children of different ages. Such staff will know how to provide a developmentally appropriate environment in which a child will progress from one developmental stage to the next, at the child's own pace .

The Quality Improvement and Accreditation System has evolved from what is known about good quality childcare practice from both research and experience, plus a wide-ranging review and extensive consultations with all sectors of the childcare industry. It is underpinned by 52 Principles covering four key areas of activity: interactions between staff and others, programming, nutrition, health and safety practices, and centre management and staff development. QIAS expands on each principle and defines 4 standards: unsatisfactory, basic, good quality, and high quality. A number of the principles are defined as Core Principles (in italics), ie, those in which achieving a 'good quality' standard is mandatory for accreditation.

For example, Principle 2 states that staff must treat all children equally and try to accommodate their individual needs: they respect diversity of background. The following excerpt in **Box 3** indicates the range of advice provided. Full details of the principles are set out in **Appendix 3.**

Box 3: Principle 2: Quality Improvement and Accreditation System for long-day care centres

Staff must treat all children equally and try to accommodate their individual needs: they respect diversity of background (core principle)

A dominant value of our society, as expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is that all individuals must be treated with equal respect. It is essential, therefore, that staff take account of the needs and abilities of all children

To regard all children equally, staff need a positive attitude towards other cultures and an active acceptance of the fact that Australia is a multicultural society where different ethnic groups co-exist harmoniously, free to maintain and practise their language, religious beliefs and social customs, while recognising that all are equal as individuals.

This approach should guide staff in both their interactions and their program planning. A program with a multicultural perspective is one which recognises the importance of similarities as well as differences in various cultures, which incorporates the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of families, staff and the community, and which includes experiences and materials which met the individual needs and interests of all children.

It should be noted that the point of a multicultural approach is not simply to take account of the cultural backgrounds of the children attending a particular centre. Indeed, it is equally important for centres with only a few cultures represented among the children, or even just one culture, to introduce children to cultural variety.

It is unsatisfactory if

- Staff communication and interaction shows no recognition that children come from a diversity of backgrounds
- Staff ignore differences in family values and practices
- Staff make no attempt to communicate with children from non-English speaking backgrounds

Basic standard if

- Staff show some awareness of difference, but it is occasional rather than consistent
- Staff use non-verbal communication to include non-English speaking children in groups

Good quality standard if

- Staff communicate and interact positively with all children, regardless of background, and incorporate some experiences that show that such differences are valued
- Staff attempt to include individual experiences for non-English speaking children

High quality standard if

- In their interactions, staff consistently demonstrate sensitivity to a wide variety of backgrounds and family structures
- Staff consult with families about the care of each child
- Staff encourage parents to participate in the centre and share some aspects of their lifestyle with the children and staff
- Staff encourage positive attitudes in all children to the different backgrounds of others.

Professional standards for teachers of Indigenous students

At its 11th meeting in 2000, MCEETYA agreed to implement a statement of principles and standards for educational infrastructure and service delivery for Indigenous students and a model of more culturally inclusive and educationally effective schools. In addition, Council asked the Taskforce to report back on progress to implement this work. This advice is reported in full separately, but in summary, the implementation of the Statement and the Model is demanding higher expectations of service delivery and Indigenous educational outcomes at a systemic and community level and that this has raised issues about teacher quality and teacher professional development.

Within this and other contexts, the Taskforce considered that it was timely to raise these issues and develop and promote a draft set of professional standards for accomplished teachers of Indigenous students to inform current discussions within jurisdictions about the quality of teaching and teaching education programs.

The following draft standards (in **Box 4**) are based on advice from the Report of the Review of Teacher Education in NSW (Ramsey report), the National Discussion Paper on Standards of Professional Practice for Accomplished Teaching in Australian Classrooms (ACSA, ACE & AARE), the work of the US National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and the early childhood AQIS.

The Taskforce recognises the current momentum for Australian society to be more democratic, socially cohesive, linguistically and culturally diverse, educated, just and open. The Adelaide Declaration states that Australia's future depends upon each citizen having the necessary knowledge, understanding, skills and values and that high quality schooling is central to achieving this vision.

Overlaying this is the imperative to achieve reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. The imperative to achieve reconciliation makes the Australian story unique in the world. The Taskforce recognises that there is a strong belief among Australian educators that reconciliation begins in our schools and that achieving educational equality for young Indigenous people is central to reconciliation.

Many of the issues raised in these draft standards reflect the Taskforce's view that accomplished teachers demonstrate their professional standards by their commitment to preparing all students for a productive and rewarding life as citizens in a democratic and multicultural Australia, and by their commitment to achieving educational equality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Box 4

DRAFT SET OF PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FOR ACCOMPLISHED TEACHERS OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDENTS

The Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the 21st Century supports a vision of Australian society. The National Goals state that 'Australia's future depends upon each citizen having the necessary knowledge, understanding, skills and values for a productive and rewarding life in an educated, just and open society. High quality schooling is central to achieving this vision'. In particular, the Adelaide Declaration underlines the capacity of all young people to learn, the role of parents as the first educators of their children, the achievement of educational standards, especially in literacy and numeracy, and the need for schooling to be socially just.

In March 2000 MCEETYA affirmed the achievement of educational equality for Australia's Indigenous peoples as a realistic goal. It is well recognised that teacher quality is a critical factor in the performance of Indigenous students in early childhood services and schools and that there is a direct link between teacher quality and Indigenous student learning outcomes. The following draft standards are designed to promote discussion on these issues.

Accomplished teachers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students demonstrate their professional standards in the following ways:

1. **Accomplished teachers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are committed to their students and their holistic development**

Accomplished teachers recognise that their principal professional obligation is to help each individual student achieve personal excellence in the intellectual, personal, social, cultural, physical, moral and other aspects of human development and welfare. They enjoy teaching and act on the belief that all students can learn and experience educational success. They strive to enable all students to develop self-confidence, optimism, self-esteem, motivation and respect for others' individual, cultural, religious and racial differences.

They are committed to building the capacity and confidence of their Indigenous students to strengthen their foundations in their own cultures, as well as to create their own identities as citizens in a democratic and multicultural Australia. Accomplished teachers understand that the freedom and capacity of their Indigenous students to interpret and to move fluently amongst cultures is critical to effective lifelong learning and for participation in Australia's democratic society.

Box 4 (cont.)

Accomplished teachers recognise the individual differences that distinguish one student from another and take account of these differences in their practice. They recognise and value the linguistic and cultural diversity of their Indigenous students and their students' home and community backgrounds. They understand that Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples are heterogeneous groups and each have rich diverse heritages, languages, cultures and knowledge built upon their relationship with each other and their ecologies that have resulted in diverse traditions, beliefs, customs and ceremonies.

Accomplished teachers understand how all students develop and learn through their culture and how participation in culture shapes student identity. They understand that many Indigenous students see strong links between land, language and culture and that they relate to time, relationship and place and position in society.

Accomplished teachers recognise that they can accelerate the educational achievements of their Indigenous students by combining a relentless approach with high expectations, good teaching and learning practice and a focus on performance indicators in literacy, numeracy and attendance. They recognise that their Indigenous students' potential as lifelong and independent learners will be enhanced through opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning.

Accomplished teachers exercise their responsibility for the 'duty-of-care' of their students, especially with respect to issues of 'child protection'. They are proactive on behalf of their students and are alert to the close relationship between low levels of Indigenous educational outcomes and poverty, and poor health, housing and access to government services and infrastructure. They abide by all statutory, legal and ethical obligations incumbent upon them as teachers.

2. Accomplished teachers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students know the subject(s) they teach and how to teach those subjects

Accomplished teachers have a rich understanding of the subject(s) they teach and appreciate how knowledge in their subject is created, organised, and applied to real-world settings. They have a good understanding of, and enthusiasm for, the intellectual content, discourses and values associated with the disciplines from which the subject(s) they teach are derived. They faithfully transmit and critically interpret the knowledge, skills and understandings associated with their subject areas. They develop teaching programmes that fully implement the aims and objectives of the relevant school curriculum.

Accomplished teachers command specialised knowledge of how to convey and reveal subject matter to students. They draw upon the art and science of teaching to inspire, motivate, correct, and demand the highest standards of their students, even in the face of temporary or apparent failure.

Accomplished teachers focus their teaching practices on Indigenous students learning to be flexible, adaptive and self-directed in terms of their current, later and lifelong learning needs. Accomplished teachers do this by building a relationship with each student, studying the values of each student, and then creating an developmental learning environment in which the students concerned undertake activities which are important to them. They focus more on the Indigenous students and the qualities, competencies and outcomes to be fostered, than on the knowledge or content to be conveyed. They provide an explicit curriculum with rich, meaningful and tangible learning situations, hands-on practice interwoven with subject knowledge, and a clear relationship between school, home and community.

Accomplished teachers are aware of the preconceptions and background knowledge that Indigenous students typically bring to each subject, and of strategies and instructional materials that can be of assistance. They understand where difficulties are likely to arise and modify their practice accordingly. Their instructional repertoire allows them to create multiple paths in the subjects they teach, and they are adept at teaching students how to pose and solve their own problems. Accomplished teachers are adept in the creative use and critical evaluation of information technologies for assisting their own teaching and in advancing the learning of their students.

3. Accomplished teachers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students take responsibility for managing and monitoring student learning

Accomplished teachers manage a learning environment that is interesting, challenging, purposeful, safe, supportive, positive, and enjoyable, which fosters co-operation and collaboration, independence, responsibility and creativity.

Accomplished teachers create, enrich, maintain and alter instructional settings to capture and sustain the interest of their Indigenous students and to make the most effective use of time. Accomplished teachers understand that that the formal curriculum may pose significant challenges to their Indigenous students in terms of content, conventional media of instruction and the skills and cultural backgrounds those media assume.

Box 4 (cont.)

They have command of a wide repertoire of teaching strategies that enable them to organise, adapt, and present the curriculum in ways that are appropriate to the needs, interests, and capacities of their students. They acknowledge and respond to the linguistic and cultural diversity of their students by modifying school curricula and exploring the impact of Indigenous cultures on classroom interactions and processes. They are adept at engaging Indigenous students and Indigenous adults from the school and the community to assist their teaching and complement their knowledge and expertise.

They take due account of the specific contexts within which they teach and their students learn, ranging from individualised learning, to one-to-one interactions, to small groups, to those involving larger numbers of students. They know how to engage groups of Indigenous students to ensure a disciplined learning environment, and how to organise instruction to allow the schools' goals for students and agreed student learning outcomes to be met. They are adept at setting norms for social interaction among Indigenous and non-Indigenous students and between students and teachers.

They are explicit in their teaching, and negotiate with and make clear to their students, the learning goals and objectives, the processes whereby these are to be achieved, the expected learning outcomes, and the forms of assessment whereby the students' educational achievements will be determined.

Accomplished teachers provide regular, accurate feedback to Indigenous students and monitor the growth in students' learning. They can assess the progress of individual students as well as that of the class as a whole. They employ multiple methods for measuring student growth and understanding, for reporting each student's achievements against the required learning outcomes as specified by the formal curriculum, and for judging the effectiveness of their own teaching. They can clearly explain Indigenous student performance to their parents.

4. Accomplished teachers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students think systematically about their practice and learn from experience

Striving to strengthen their teaching, accomplished teachers critically examine their practice, seek to expand their repertoire, deepen their knowledge, sharpen their judgment and adapt their teaching to new findings, ideas and theories. Accomplished teachers draw on their knowledge of human development, subject matter and instruction, and their understanding of their students to make principled judgments about sound practice. Their decisions are not only grounded in the literature, but also in their experience. They engage in lifelong learning which they seek to encourage in their students.

Accomplished teachers exemplify the qualities that they seek to inspire in their students: intellectual curiosity and rigour, tolerance, fairness, common sense, self-confidence, respect for self and others, empathy, compassion, appreciation of diversity, and striving for reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. They exemplify the capacities that are prerequisites for intellectual growth: the ability to reason and take multiple perspectives to be creative and take risks, and to adopt an experimental and problem-solving orientation.

Accomplished teachers exercise high quality communication and interpersonal skills. They are exemplary in their own literacy and numeracy practices and having the necessary knowledge, skills and understanding and professional values to exercise the crucial responsibility that all teachers have as teachers of literacy and numeracy.

Accomplished teachers work with Indigenous communities to strengthen and exercise their own freedom and capacity to interpret and to move fluently amongst Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures.

5. Accomplished teachers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are members of learning communities

Accomplished teachers are committed to their own professional development; they seek to deepen their knowledge, sharpen their judgement, expand their teaching repertoire, and to adapt their teaching to educationally sound developments arising from authentic research and scholarship. They find ways to access the professional support, resources, knowledge and understanding which enables them to draw on community experiences and contexts that are part of the everyday lives of students in their classroom.

Accomplished teachers are reflective practitioners who critique the impact of their teaching and professional values upon students, colleagues and others in the wider learning community, by having a critical awareness of the role played by their own educational, social, cultural, religious, financial and other background experiences; and how these experiences may have helped to shape their own values, their approach to teaching, and their assumptions about teaching.

Box 4 (cont.)

Accomplished teachers find ways to work collaboratively and creatively with parents, engaging them productively in the work of the school. They understand that a stronger partnership between the school and parents/ caregivers of Indigenous students will be reflected in improvements in academic achievement, more regular attendance and better engagement of Indigenous students in schooling.

They research and explore ways in which all their students can discover and explore their own cultural identities and have opportunities to consider the methods and content of the school curriculum from the perspective of their own cultural identity. Accomplished teachers explore ways in the current educational context to enable their Indigenous students to re-position their cultures, languages, histories, spiritual beliefs and lifestyles in a way which affirms identity and the ability to operate in cross-cultural situations.

Accomplished teachers contribute to the effectiveness of the school by working collaboratively with their colleagues and other professionals to develop instructional and welfare policies, curriculum and staff development; and helping to ensure that the essential goals of the school as a learning community are met. In particular, they contribute to the effectiveness of the school by being sensitive and responsive to the educational issues generated by and within Australia's multicultural society within the context of continuing to develop a socially cohesive Australian society. They work with their colleagues to include in the curriculum, those Indigenous issues and perspectives necessary to help achieve reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians:

They can evaluate school progress and the allocation of school resources in light of their understanding of state and local educational objectives. They are knowledgeable about specialized school and community resources that can be engaged for their students' benefit, and are skilled at employing such resources as needed.

Discussions about these draft standards need to be informed by consideration of separate advice prepared by the Taskforce in relation to the early childhood, vocational education and training, and higher education sectors:

- *Solid Foundations: Health and Education Partnership for Indigenous Children Aged 0 To 8 Years;*
- *Effective Learning Issues for Indigenous Children aged 0 to 8 Years;*
- *Exploring Multiple Pathways for Indigenous Peoples.*

In addition, discussion about these draft standards needs to be complimented with further discussions within jurisdictions about the importance of compulsory Indigenous studies training for students in teacher training, and also the importance of ongoing professional development for teachers through cross cultural training and contemporary issues affecting Indigenous students.

APPENDIX 1

The Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the 21st Century (1999)

The State, Territory and Commonwealth Ministers of Education met as the 10th Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) in Adelaide, 22-23 April 1999, chaired by the Minister for Education, Children's Services and Training in South Australia, the Hon Malcolm Buckby MP. Conscious that the schooling of Australia's children is the foundation on which to build our future as a nation, Council agreed to act jointly to assist Australian schools in meeting the challenges of our times. In reaching agreement to address the following areas of common concern, the State, Territory and Commonwealth Ministers of Education made an historic commitment to improving Australian Schooling within a framework of national collaboration.

Preamble

Australia's future depends upon each citizen having the necessary knowledge, understanding, skills and values for a productive and rewarding life in an educated, just and open society. High quality schooling is central to achieving this vision.

This statement of national goals for schooling provides broad directions to guide schools and education authorities in securing these outcomes for students.

It acknowledges the capacity of all young people to learn, and the role of schooling in developing that capacity. It also acknowledges the role of parents as the first educators of their children and the central role of teachers in the learning process.

Schooling provides a foundation for young Australians' intellectual, physical, social, moral, spiritual and aesthetic development. By providing a supportive and nurturing environment, schooling contributes to the development of students' sense of self-worth, enthusiasm for learning and optimism for the future.

Governments set the public policies that foster the pursuit of excellence, enable a diverse range of educational choices and aspirations, safeguard the entitlement of all young people to high quality schooling, promote the economic use of public resources, and uphold the contribution of schooling to a socially cohesive and culturally rich society.

Common and agreed goals for schooling establish a foundation for action among State and Territory governments with their constitutional responsibility for schooling, the Commonwealth, non-government school authorities and all those who seek the best possible educational outcomes for young Australians, to improve the quality of schooling nationally . The achievement of these common and agreed national goals entails a commitment to collaboration for the purposes of:

- further strengthening schools as learning communities where teachers, students and their families work in partnership with business, industry and the wider community
- enhancing the status and quality of the teaching profession
- continuing to develop curriculum and related systems of assessment, accreditation and credentialling that promote quality and are nationally recognised and valued
- increasing public confidence in school education through explicit and defensible standards that guide improvement in students' levels of educational achievement and through which the effectiveness, efficiency and equity of schooling can be measured and evaluated.

These national goals provide a basis for investment in schooling to enable all young people to engage effectively with an increasingly complex world. This world will be characterised by advances in information and communication technologies, population diversity arising from international mobility and migration, and complex environmental and social challenges.

The achievement of the national goals for schooling will assist young people to contribute to Australia's social, cultural and economic development in local and global contexts. Their achievement will also assist young people to develop a disposition towards learning throughout their lives so that they can exercise their rights and responsibilities as citizens of Australia.

Goals

1. Schooling should develop fully the talents and capacities of all students. In particular, when students leave school, they should:

1.1 have the capacity for, and skills in, analysis and problem solving and the ability to communicate ideas and information, to plan and organise activities, and to collaborate with others.

1.2 have qualities of self-confidence, optimism, high self-esteem, and a commitment to personal excellence as a basis for their potential life roles as family, community and workforce members.

1.3 have the capacity to exercise judgement and responsibility in matters of morality, ethics and social justice, and the capacity to make sense of their world, to think about how things got to be the way they are, to make rational and informed decisions about their own lives, and to accept responsibility for their own actions.

1.4 be active and informed citizens with an understanding and appreciation of Australia's system of government and civic life.

1.5 have employment related skills and an understanding of the work environment, career options and pathways as a foundation for, and positive attitudes towards, vocational education and training, further education, employment and life-long learning.

1.6 be confident, creative and productive users of new technologies, particularly information and communication technologies, and understand the impact of those technologies on society.

1.7 have an understanding of, and concern for, stewardship of the natural environment, and the knowledge and skills to contribute to ecologically sustainable development.

1.8 have the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to establish and maintain a healthy lifestyle, and for the creative and satisfying use of leisure time.

2. In terms of curriculum, students should have:

2.1 attained high standards of knowledge, skills and understanding through a comprehensive and balanced curriculum in the compulsory years of schooling encompassing the agreed eight key learning areas:

- the arts;
- English;
- health and physical education;
- languages other than English;
- mathematics;
- science;
- studies of society and environment; and
- technology.

and the interrelationships between them.

2.2 attained the skills of numeracy and English literacy; such that, every student should be numerate, able to read, write, spell and communicate at an appropriate level.

2.3 participated in programs of vocational learning during the compulsory years and have had access to vocational education and training programs as part of their senior secondary studies.

2.4 participated in programs and activities which foster and develop enterprise skills, including those skills which will allow them maximum flexibility and adaptability in the future.

3. Schooling should be socially just, so that:

3.1 students' outcomes from schooling are free from the effects of negative forms of discrimination based on sex, language, culture and ethnicity, religion or disability; and of differences arising from students' socio-economic background or geographic location.

3.2 the learning outcomes of educationally disadvantaged students improve and, over time, match those of other students.

3.3 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students have equitable access to, and opportunities in, schooling so that their learning outcomes improve and, over time, match those of other students.

3.4 all students understand and acknowledge the value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures to Australian society and possess the knowledge, skills and understanding to contribute to, and benefit from, reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

3.5 all students understand and acknowledge the value of cultural and linguistic diversity, and possess the knowledge, skills and understanding to contribute to, and benefit from, such diversity in the Australian community and internationally.

3.6 all students have access to the high quality education necessary to enable the completion of school education to Year 12 or its vocational equivalent and that provides clear and recognised pathways to employment and further education and training.

APPENDIX 2

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES AND STANDARDS FOR MORE CULTURALLY INCLUSIVE SCHOOLING IN THE 21ST CENTURY

All Australians have the democratic right to an education that allows them a fair share of the social goods of education, ie. the right to participate fully in society as respected equals and to be able to choose from the same range of opportunities and futures as other Australians.

This democratic right to an education that prepares Indigenous Australians for a future in the 21st century has been supported by a range of national policy statements over the last decade: the Hobart Declaration on Schooling (1989), the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy (AEP, 1989), the National Strategy for the Education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (1996-2002) and the Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the 21st Century (1999).

The Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the 21st Century (1999) states that 'Australia's future depends upon each citizen having the necessary knowledge, understanding, skills and values for a productive and rewarding life in an educated, just and open society. High quality schooling is central to achieving this vision...Governments set the public policies that...safeguard the entitlement of all young people to high quality schooling'.

In particular, the Adelaide Declaration underlines the capacity of all young people to learn and the role of parents as the first educators of their children.

The Declaration also underlines the need to increase public confidence in school education 'through the establishment of explicit and defensible standards that guide improvement in students' levels of achievement and through which the effectiveness, efficiency and equity of schooling can be measured and evaluated'.

In addition, the Adelaide Declaration states that schooling should be socially just, so that:

- 'students outcomes from schooling are free from the negative forms of discrimination based on sex, language, culture and ethnicity, religion or disability; and of differences arising from students' socio-economic background or geographic isolation' (3.1);

- 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students have equitable access to, and opportunities in, schooling so that their learning outcomes improve, and over time, match those of other students' (3.3);

- 'all students have access to the high quality education necessary to enable completion of school education to year 12 or its vocational equivalent and that provides clear and recognised pathways to employment and further education and training' (3.6);

and in terms of curriculum, 'students should be numerate and able to read, write, spell and communicate at an appropriate level'.

The Adelaide Declaration, the AEP and the work over the last decade provides a framework for accelerating the achievement of equitable and appropriate educational outcomes for Indigenous Australians, in which the principles underpinning the education of Indigenous Australians are affirmed and more importantly a number of key standards are established.

PRINCIPLES

Principles are described in terms of the right of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to high-quality schooling and the rights and responsibilities of parents as the first educators of their children.

1. Schooling acknowledges the capacity of all young Indigenous people to learn by:

   1.1 providing a climate that welcomes and values all Indigenous students and that expects and supports them to achieve equitable and appropriate educational outcomes;

   1.2 establishing effective teaching/learning relationships between the educator and the Indigenous learner;

   1.3 enrolling all compulsory-aged Indigenous children and expecting all hdigenous children to attend school regularly, be actively engaged and participate in a meaningful and confident manner;

   1.4 expecting all Indigenous children to be fluent in Standard Australian English and at the same time being inclusive of the student's home language;

   1.5 increasing the numbers of Indigenous people across all staffing levels and increasing the involvement of community members in the school;

   1.6 providing a curriculum which:

      (i) is free from the negative forms of discrimination based on sex, language, culture and ethnicity, religion or disability; and of differences arising from Indigenous students' socio-economic background or geographic isolation,

      (ii) allows Indigenous students to share in the same educational opportunities experienced by other Australian students and at the same time allows them to be strong in their own culture and language and reposition their cultures, languages, histories, beliefs and lifestyles in a way which affirms identity and the ability to operate in cross-cultural situations,

      (iii) supports all students to understand and acknowledge the value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures to Australian society and possess the knowledge, skills and understanding to contribute to, and benefit from, reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians;

2. Schooling acknowledges the role of Indigenous parents as the first educators of their children by:

   2.1 providing a climate that welcomes Indigenous parents and caregivers as valuable members of the school community;

   2.2 actively increasing public confidence in education and training through a process of explicit involvement of Indigenous parents/caregivers and community in the achievement of equitable and appropriate educational outcomes;

   2.3 supporting parents and caregivers of Indigenous students in their responsibilities to ensure that their children attend school regularly.

3. Schooling acknowledges the close relationship between low levels of Indigenous educational outcomes and poverty, health, housing and access to government services and infrastructure by developing cross-portfolio mechanisms to address these issues.

STANDARDS

Standards are described in terms of the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their teachers and education workers to access the same level of government services as other Australians and to achieve equitable and appropriate educational outcomes.

1. Schooling is socially just when education facilities and services are provided by governments which:

   1.1 are locally accessible for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island children;

   1.2 are built and maintained to the same standard for Indigenous students as for other Australian children in the State/Territory;

   1.3 address the teaching practice and classroom acoustic requirements of hearing impaired Indigenous students;

   1.4 provide all Indigenous students with access to the high quality education necessary to enable completion of school education to year 12 or its vocational equivalent and that provides clear and recognised pathways to employment and further education and training;

   1.5 allow Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with disabilities, especially hearing impairments, to access specialist services and support at a level and quality considered appropriate for non-Indigenous students with similar disabilities;

   1.6 ensure that teachers and other education workers involved in providing services to Indigenous students have the same level of qualifications as is required for teaching other Australian students in that State/ Territory;

   1.7 ensure that the same level of educational infrastructure, facilities, services and professional development is available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and education workers as is available to other teachers and education workers in that State/ Territory;

   1.8 ensure that all teachers and education workers involved in teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students participate in effective training in cross-cultural pedagogy and ESL;

   1.9 ensure that all education and training advisory, management and review committees at a system level or in schools with Indigenous students have Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander membership.

2. Governments ensure that high-quality, accredited and culturally inclusive education and training opportunities are provided in prisons, youth detention centres and other juvenile justice programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

3. Schooling will accelerate the achievement of equitable and appropriate educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students when:

3.1 all Indigenous children achieve National Goals in Literacy and Numeracy by:

(i) leaving primary school numerate, and able to read, write and spell at an appropriate level,

(ii) meeting the national benchmarks in literacy and numeracy,

3.2 attendance rates for Indigenous students across all levels of schooling are comparable to the rates of their non-Indigenous peers;

3.3 participation rates to year 12 or its equivalent for Indigenous students are comparable to the rates of their non-Indigenous peers.

APPENDIX 3

Principles of the Quality Improvement and Accreditation System for long-day early childhood centres

Core Principles (ie, those in which 'Good Quality' is mandatory for accreditation) are indicated in italics.

Part A: Interactions

A(i): Interactions between staff and children

1. *staff interactions with children are warm and friendly*
2. *staff treat all children equally and try to accommodate their individual needs: they respect diversity of background*
3. *staff treat all children equally and try to accommodate their individual needs: they treat both sexes without bias*
4. *staff use a positive approach in guidance and discipline*
5. staff are responsive to children's feelings and needs
6. staff initiate and maintain communication with children, and their communication conveys respect
7. staff show respect for children's developing competence, and foster their self-esteem and independence
8. staff interact with children to stimulate their curiosity and thinking
9. staff create a pleasant atmosphere

A(ii): Interactions between staff and parents

10. *there is verbal and written communication with all families about the centre*
11. *there is active exchange of information between parents and staff*
12. there is an orientation process for new children and parents
13. parents and other family members are encouraged to be involved in the program

A(iii): Interactions between staff

14. *staff communicate well with each other*
15. staff show respect for other members of the team.

Part B: Program

16 *the program is planned to reflect the centre's philosophy and goals*
17 *the program incorporates learning experiences appropriate for each child, as indicated by development records maintained by the centre*
18 *the program gives children the opportunity to make choices and take on new challenges*
19 *the program fosters personal and social development*
20 *the program fosters fine and gross motor skill developments*
21 *the program fosters creative development and aesthetic awareness*
22 *toileting and nappy changing procedures meet individual needs and are positive experiences*
23 *sleep time and dressing procedures meet individual needs for rest, comfort and self-help*
24 *meal times are pleasant occasions*
25 the program provides a wide range of individual and group experiences
26 a daily timetable is planned to reflect children's needs, abilities and interests
27 procedures for routine activities are flexible and developmentally appropriate
28 transitions between activities are smooth
29 the program fosters intellectual development
30 the program fosters language development
31 there is a balanced and developmentally appropriate program
32 the program provides for children with special needs
33 the program is regularly evaluated in the light of stated goals.

Part C: Nutrition, health and safety practices

34 *staff are alert to the health and welfare of each child*
35 *staff try to ensure that children are clothed appropriately for indoor and outdoor play and for sleep*
36 food and drinks meet children's daily nutritional requirements and are culturally appropriate
37 meal times promote health nutritional habits
38 food is prepared and stored hygienically
39 staff adhere to hygiene principles which reduce the spread of infectious diseases
40 staff encourage children to follow simple rules of hygiene
41 potentially dangerous products are inaccessible to children
42 buildings and equipment are safe and hygienic
43 the centre maintains a record of children's immunisations
44 the centre has written policies on hygiene, medical, emergency and accident procedures
45 staff are familiar with medical, emergency and accident procedures
46 staff supervise children at all times
47 information on health and other related issues is readily available to the staff

Part D: Centre management and staff development

48 *staff and parents consult on the program and evaluate it together*
49 *new staff are informed about the philosophy and goals of the centre*
50 the centre provides regular learning and training opportunities for staff
51 the staff roster is arranged to provide continuity of care
52 information about the centre's management is readily available to staff and parents.

REFERENCES

Australian Council of Deans of Education (1998), *Preparing a Profession: Report of the National Standards and Guidelines for Initial Teacher Education Project*, DETYA;

Australian College of Education (2000), *Standards of Professional Practice for Accomplished Teaching in Australian Classrooms: A National Discussion Paper;*

Australian Early Childhood Association, (1993), *Putting Children First: Quality Improvement and Accreditation System Handbook*, National Childcare Accreditation Council;

Bourke, C (1996), *Literature Review of Indigenous Attrition*, Evaluations and Investigations Program 9618, Higher Education Division, Commonwealth DETYA;

CESCEO Early Childhood Education Working Party (March and October 2000), *A way forward in early childhood education and care in Australia*, Background Paper, unpublished;

Christensen, P and Ian Lilley (1997), *The Road Forward? Alternative Assessment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students at the Tertiary Level*, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit, University of Queensland, Evaluations and Investigations Program 9708, Commonwealth DETYA;

Commonwealth of Australia (1998), *A Class Act: Chapter 7 Teacher recruitment and training*, Senate Employment, Education and Training References Committee;

Commonwealth of Australia (1996), *National Competency Framework for Beginning Teaching;* AGPS;

Council for Basic Education (2000), Various Articles, http://www.c-b-e.org/step/stepprss.htm;

Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (2000), *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice – Statistics: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples;*

MCEETYA Taskforce on Indigenous Education, (2000), *Report of MCEETYA Taskforce on Indigenous Education;*

Ministerial Advisory Council on the Quality of Teaching (1998), *Towards Greater Professionalism: Teacher, Educators, Teaching and the Curriculum*, Department of Education and Training NSW;

National Center for Education Statistics (1999), *Statistical Analysis Report January 1999 – Teacher Quality: A Report on the Preparation and Qualifications of Public School Teachers*, U.S. Department of Education;

Pargetter, R, et al (1998), *Transition from Secondary to Tertiary: A Performance Study*, Commonwealth Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs;

Professional Teachers' Associations NSW, (1999) Review of Teacher Education in NSW, *Points raised during presentation and discussion at 1999 PTCNSW Annual General Meeting*, Wednesday 8 September 1999;

Promnitz, J & Germain, C (1996), *Student Support Services and Academic Outcomes: Achieving Positive Outcomes,* Evaluations and Investigations Program 96/10, Higher Education Division, Commonwealth DETYA;

Ramsey,G (2000), *Quality Matters: Report of the Review of Teacher Education, NSW,* NSW Department of Education and Training;

University of Wollongong Media Release, (19 October 2000), *Head of NSW teacher education review visits UOW;*

Uys, P (1999), paper presented at the "ED-MEDIA 99" Conference in Seattle, USA, *Towards the Virtual Class: Technology Issues from a Fractal Management Perspective*, hydi Educational New Media Centre, Wellington;

Uys, P (1998), Seminar at the Knowledge Media Institute of the Open University in London, UK, *Findings in Distributed On-line Education,* Hydi Educational New Media Centre, Wellington;

Walker, R (2000), *Indigenous Performance in Western Australia Universities: Reframing Retention and Success,* Evaluations and Investigations Program, Commonwealth DETYA;

World Indigenous Peoples' Conference on Education, Fifth Tri-Annual, August 1st to 7th, Hawai'i (1999), *Report to Indigenous Communities,* Umulliko Research Advisory Committee, Department of Aboriginal Studies.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

NOTICE

REPRODUCTION BASIS

☑ This document is covered by a signed "Reproduction Release (Blanket)" form (on file within the ERIC system), encompassing all or classes of documents from its source organization and, therefore, does not require a "Specific Document" Release form.

☐ This document is Federally-funded, or carries its own permission to reproduce, or is otherwise in the public domain and, therefore, may be reproduced by ERIC without a signed Reproduction Release form (either "Specific Document" or "Blanket").